St. Anthony’s and Holy Spirit School Enrolment Policy

Rationale

Catholic education is intrinsic to the mission of the Church. It is one means by which the Church fulfils its role in assisting people to discover and embrace the fullness of life in Christ.

The Australian bishops established Catholic schools in the 1860s as a key instrument of catechesis and sacramental preparation for Catholic children. Catholic schools continue to offer a broad, comprehensive curriculum imbued with an authentic Catholic understanding of Christ and his teaching, as well as a lived appreciation of membership of the Catholic Church.

This CEOM Enrolment Policy establishes that the first priority of a Catholic school is the provision of a Catholic education for Catholic children. This reflects the historical context of Catholic education in Australia, as well as confirming the participation of the Catholic school in the Church's mission. As a result, formation and education in a Catholic school must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine.

To support the view that Catholic schools are primarily for Catholic children, this policy and accompanying procedures establish an expectation that schools will work towards and/or maintain the highest possible level of Catholic enrolment. This policy also outlines the roles of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) and schools in working together to achieve this goal.

In keeping with the concern to ensure that Catholic schools are accessible for all Catholic families, this CEOM Enrolment Policy promotes a consistent and transparent approach to the establishment and implementation of local school enrolment policies. It is envisaged that in order to achieve this objective, cooperation and collaboration will be required between schools and, where appropriate, between regions.

This policy also supports the special relationship that continues to exist between the Catholic Church and the non-Catholic Eastern Churches, based on a belief in the same sacraments and a close nexus in understanding about theology and sacraments.

This CEOM Enrolment Policy is also intended to ensure that, when enrolling students, Catholic schools are compliant with relevant Victorian and Australian Government legislation.

Principles and Implementation

Inclusiveness

Catholic schools have been established primarily for Catholic children and Catholic schools should strive to be open and welcoming to all Catholic students, regardless of their background and needs, and do everything possible to accommodate a student's individual needs. Schools should extend particular assistance to children who are poor or disadvantaged or considered most at risk.

With a significant proportion of Catholic children in other than Catholic schools, it is important that strategies be developed to raise the percentage of Catholic children in Catholic schools. Then, if appropriate, Catholic schools should welcome children of other Christian traditions and other faiths who seek what Catholic education has to offer, with a priority given to children from non-Catholic Eastern Churches.
Partnership between parents and school
Parents, as the first educators of their children, enter into a partnership with the Catholic school to promote and support their child’s education, in particular their education in faith. While the school promotes access to a Catholic education through the local school enrolment policy, parents should also assume a responsibility for maintaining this partnership by supporting the school in furthering the spiritual and academic life of their children.

Exercise of pastoral discretion in enrolment decisions
Local pastoral discretion is an important element of decision-making with regard to enrolment in a Catholic school. Therefore, while bearing in mind that their first priority is to Catholic parents, parish priests and principals of Catholic schools should be able to exercise some flexibility with respect to enrolment decisions where pastoral discretion may be deemed necessary.

Access to information about enrolment in a Catholic school
Information concerning the local school enrolment policy, enrolment criteria and processes should be publicly available and easily accessible by current and prospective parents. As part of its minimum standards for school registration, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) require all schools to have a clearly defined enrolment policy.

Definitions

Catholic child - For the purpose of enrolment in a Catholic school, a child is considered to be Catholic if they are a member of the Catholic Church, usually established by a Certificate of Catholic Baptism.

Catholic school - A Catholic school is one which operates with the consent of the diocesan Bishop and is one where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and the teachers are outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.

Catchment area for schools - For the purpose of enrolment, the school catchment is the parish or group of parishes, as defined by the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM), from which the school draws the majority of its enrolments and to which the school gives priority of enrolment. For the majority of primary schools this will be the parish to which the school belongs. In those parishes with more than one primary school the catchment for each school is determined by the parish in consultation with the CEOM. For secondary schools it will be those parishes designated as 'priority parishes' by the CEOM.

Parish - For the purposes of enrolment we will follow the traditional parish boundaries as marked out by the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Selection Criteria
1. Baptised Catholics families living within the boundaries of the parish
2. Baptised Catholic families who live outside the parish boundaries but who worship at Holy Spirit/St.Anthony’s.
3. Catholic families actively involved in the life of the parish.
4. Catholic families contributing financially to the parish in accordance with their means.
5. Consideration is given to children from other Christian traditions
6. Siblings are a consideration